

Senior Pastor Voting Results

Dear FBCN Family,

We would like to thank everyone who participated this weekend in our vote for Senior Pastor. A record 3,818 were in attendance for the weekend as Marcus Hayes delivered a powerful message on hope and hitting the mark for Christ. The energy and excitement was like nothing we have ever seen before. After the votes were counted, a super majority of 81% voted for Marcus Hayes to be our next Senior Pastor. Unfortunately, 81% did not reach the threshold of 85% for approval per our constitution and bylaws requirement. Regretfully, these 365 "no" votes controlled the desire of the 1,552 super majority "yes" votes. Certainly, the election of a Senior Pastor in any church is a weighty issue. Undeniably, our duly elected Senior Pastor Search Team worked tirelessly for six months to seek God's face in who our next man would be.

While your church leadership is disappointed that the minority vote has thwarted the will and desire of the majority, we recognize that the 81% vote must be acknowledged. While there is disappointment and heartache over the results of the vote, what is potentially more concerning are the actions of a part of the minority group leading up to the vote. Certainly it is one thing to disagree, but it is a whole other thing to use unscrupulous, divisive, and false accusations to achieve one's goals. If that were not bad enough, part of the minority "no" vote did something that, quite honestly, should never ever have its place in society, much less the Lord's Church. Last week, through social media, texting, phone calls, and emails, racial prejudice was introduced into our voting process.

Please know that specifically your Pastoral Staff is deeply, deeply grieved. We are grieved for Marcus and Mandy that they had to endure such vileness. We are deeply grieved that the wonderful name of our Lord and the reputation of First Baptist Church Naples was affected by this campaign against Marcus Hayes. Your Pastoral Staff, as the spiritual leadership of FBCN, will not stand for these kinds of attitudes and actions. We are calling anyone who took part in such divisive and sinful actions to immediately confess and repent. Jesus calls His church His bride. And it is His goal, as we know through scripture, that His bride is to be beautiful and clean before Him. Church family, we have a deep, dark stain right now in this bride of Christ known as FBCN. The stain has come through a small group of people who call themselves "Voices of FBCN", and/or "Group of Concerned FBCN Members", as well as others who have espoused these sinful positions. You have our commitment that as a Pastoral Staff, under the Lord's leadership, we will do the things necessary to stand before the Lord and say that we love His bride, and we are doing all to see that she is the beautiful group of people that the Lord would desire.

The Pastoral Staff and all church leadership ask you to join with us as we seek to make FBCN all that God has in His mind for it to be. We are sure that you have many questions going forward, and we will be answering them in due time. But please know this, that our Senior Pastor Search Team will meet to identify options moving forward with our Senior Pastor search. For now, we humbly ask you to stay strong in the Lord. **He IS on His Throne!** He has a great plan for our church! Pray with us and lock arms with us as we move forward and seek the face of God. Your leadership would welcome your thoughts as we move forward.

Blessings,
Your Pastoral Staff